Fungible Life

of Riverwest to several key literatures. For instance, Perry juxtaposes her work to Robert Putnam's critique of diversity by showing how diversity can be stable. She responds to Robert Sampson's study of neighborhood effects by refusing to make assumptions about the collective goals of neighborhoods and stressing cultural heterogeneity. Yet, Perry does not count herself among uncritical boosters of integration and diversity either because she centers the role of conflict as a way of living with diversity. Throughout the book, Perry effectively relates her analysis to current literature on gentrification, diversity discourse, culture and place, and social disorder. Outside of the classroom, *Live and Let Live* will interest urban sociologists and other scholars working on the role of culture in inequality, diversity, and race.

I had a few misgivings about the book. I think that Perry underestimates how much countercultural groups and movements in Riverwest contribute to the neighborhood's stable integration. Local anarchist activity, what sounds like a vibrant LGBTQ scene, and residents' references to socialism, anticapitalism, and collaboration all would seem to expand the space for alternative social norms. I also wished for more ethnographic detail on block watches and more mention of local schools. However, these misgivings hardly detract from the merit and strengths of this noteworthy book.

Fungible Life: Experiment in the Asian City of Life. By Aihwa Ong. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2016. Pp. xxiv+285. $94.95 (cloth); $35.95 (paper).

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A fungible item is interchangeable with other items of the same type. An often-cited example of something that is fungible is money. The argument of Aihwa Ong's *Fungible Life* is that Biopolis, Singapore's flagship Centre for the Life Sciences, is making "Asian" DNA fungible.

DNA sequencing produces information—represented by familiar lists of As, Ts, Cs and Gs—that is freed from its biological context and can be circulated. Many research centers around the world produce sequence information, but researchers in Singapore can draw on a population that has a distinctive multiracial makeup, categorized in terms inherited from colonial rule (Chinese, Indian, Malay-Muslim, etc.). Ong shows how scientists in Biopolis construct DNA databases that can travel beyond Singapore and come to "represent majority 'Asian' populations in the world" (p. 207). This means that groups "who were previously excluded from 'universal' biomedical research can now be brought under the molecular gaze" (p. xix).

With this starting point, and based on nine years of fieldwork in Singapore, the book addresses various different aspects of fungible *life* in Biopolis, the city of life. It traverses a range of topics: from living with cancers with high incidence among Asian populations, to the potential for lifesaving

cures from stem cell research, to tracing Asia's living ancestry, to the lives of immigrant and homegrown scientists, to the ever present threat to life from tropical diseases, particularly severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Ong argues that "through the interweaving of technological, molecular, corporeal, epidemiological, and epistemological dimensions, the 'Asian' approach and 'Asianness' of the knowledge is a continuous thread that connects all the other chapters in this book" (p. 152).

My own research on the sociology of the life sciences has taken me to Singapore, and it is the insights this book gives about this "small, smart, and nimble" (p. 23) "air-conditioned nation" (p. 175) that I found most useful. Ong shows why Singapore has been "the gateway to all of Asia" (p. 106) in a scientific sense—because it is global in outlook, well regulated, and free from government corruption and has a highly educated, English-speaking workforce. One of Singapore's national characteristics, *kiasu*, or "fear of losing out" (p. 4), at both an individual and national level, spurs competiveness.

The Singapore government has committed to bioscience as one of the pillars of its economy as have many other nations. Ong raises the intriguing question of whether "the interrelation of biotechnologies, capitalism, and politics" in this particular location can "be generative of alternate goals" (p. 6). This question is never directly answered, but we hear that the founder of Biopolis wanted his venture to be "as much about building a regional biotech commons as about furthering biocapitalism—in Asia" (p. 116), although he laments that recent governmental initiatives have pushed Biopolis toward an "industry-aligned mode" (p. 116), more similar to the biocapitalism that dominates Europe and the United States.

So this is necessarily a study of how the "biosciences become relentlessly entrepreneurial and global" (p. 134). But one of the most interesting chapters reveals how, even in this context, ideas of scientific virtue take on distinctive forms in Singapore, partially because of the large number of expatriate scientists. Ong shows that for Singaporean nationals "scientific virtue and civic duty are entangled" (p. 24), whereas scientists employed from abroad may be driven less by a desire to serve the common good than by personal career goals.

In the final chapter we move to BGI Genomics, a bioscience research center in Shenzhen, China, which Ong uses as a foil to Biopolis. As she notes, BGI has become a scientific force that is increasingly difficult to ignore, both because of the breathtaking speed and scale of its genome sequencing efforts and "for the ways in which it is taken to embody, rightly or not, a number of worries over Chinese science in its deviation from cosmopolitan scientific structures and strictures" (pp. 198–99). It is the "Chineseness" of BGI that Ong draws out in comparison to Biopolis. This is a Chineseness that she finds in the leaders of BGI who "present themselves as patriotic citizens of the PRC who want to do science that contributes to China's sustainability, prestige, and national identity" (p. 205). She also finds it in concerted efforts at the BGI to sequence humans, animals, plants, and microbes regarded as "Chinese" life forms.

The comparison between BGI and Biopolis is particularly revealing in two respects. The first is in the different ways in which these institutions mobilize the notion of "Asia." While Biopolis "is an extension of Euro-American cosmopolitan science using 'Asian' materials" (p. 198), at the BGI "Asia" stands for "China's scale, population heft, and inexpensive high-skilled labor" (p. 228). The second point of comparison returns to the theme of fungibility. Ong argues that when it comes to ethnic biomedical categories, BGI does not exhibit the fungibility that is so central to her account of Biopolis. While at Biopolis the aim is to enable "Asian DNA" to travel across borders, "BGI identifies ethnic biomedical categories that are particular to China, intended for solving national problems of health and biosecurity" (p. 224).

Because of my interests in the rise of the life sciences in Asia, it is the above points that I will take away from this book. I found myself taking fewer notes on the many ways in which Ong uses biological concepts (such as pluripotency and virus super-spreaders) as tools for anthropological analysis or on her crosscutting themes of "risks," "uncertainties," and "known unknowns," but other readers may find these of interest.

I end with a point that I think raises important questions about the place of the social sciences in this city of life. Arguing that "sophisticated science demands an engaged public equal to its ambition to change the forms and norms of life as we know it" (p. 226), Ong remarks on the lack of social scientific and philosophical engagement with the life sciences in Biopolis. She maintains that it is necessary "to start a public conversation about the wide-ranging implications of experiments with life" (p. 226) that she has analyzed in depth. Perhaps this book will help start such a conversation.

Diaspora and Trust: Cuba, Mexico, and the Rise of China. By Adrian H. Hearn. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2016. Pp. ix+266. $94.95 (cloth); $24.95 (paper).

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The central paradox of Adrian Hearn's *Diaspora and Trust: Cuba, Mexico, and the Rise of China* revolves around the complex relationship of Chinese immigrants and their descendants to the economic and ethnic climate in Mexico and Cuba. Although his central research question holds the relationship of governments as its primary unit of analysis, Hearn also takes seriously the dynamics of ethnicity and racialization of these countries' geopolitics. The social dynamics of Chinese diasporic communities and Mexicans and Cubans "on the ground" are historically specific as political economics and relationships with China. As such, Hearn divides his analysis between vertical (state-society relationships) and horizontal (community solidarity) relationships to tease out how the two work in tandem to maximize or jeopardize economic potential with China. Domestic anxieties about China's